

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Written by the Late Judge H. A. Anderson

Part IX

The Ravages of Diphtheria

I remember, however, that a few years afterward I often recalled the old man's message, for a calamity did visit the people along Pigeon Creek and other communities in the form of black diphtheria. It was a scourge so terrible that men and women trembled and paled at the mere mention of the name. Many a proud and happy mother who with prayers and blessings tucked away in their humble beds five, six children on Sunday evening found herself on the following morning weeping because they were not. So swiftly did this dark messenger work that it frequently happened that the little ones were not parted but went into the long silence two, three, and even four at a time.

Among my near friends and acquaintances who suffered the loss of their little ones through this awful plague were Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Smith of Big Slough, Lauris P. Sinrud, Johannes Thorsen, Halvor Monson, Peder Ekern, and many others. One of the doctors who was called on to minister to the afflicted while this epidemic was about, told me years afterward that he was called on in fourteen cases, but that in every instance the disease proved fatal.

In those days there was no quarantine and few precautions used to prevent the spread of the disease. Large funerals were held where friends of the bereaved gathered around the little coffin to weep and console with the stricken parents. Though at that time, as at present, I was not affiliated with any church or denomination, I was on several occasions called on to officiate at funerals in lieu of preachers. All through my life since I reached manhood friends and acquaintances have at frequent intervals called to me from the border of the grave to come to them to sing some favorite hymn or read a familiar part of the Bible or requested me to speak at their funerals, although they knew they were by virtue of their good standing as members of orthodox churches entitled to the ministry of regularly ordained ministers of the church. It is probably because of that many of my friends have so often insisted that I failed to select my proper vocation.

During the fall of and winter of 1872 occurred an event in Big Slough which changed the current of many lives.

The Rev. O. A. Olson, reared near Lake Koskonong, in Jefferson county, Wis., had recently become an elder or preacher for the Seventh Day Adventists when he appeared in Big Slough in 1872. He was a man of engaging personality, deep with steadfast convictions, impressive earnestness and indefatigable industry.

He preached the soon coming of Christ, urged all to return to the biblical Sabbath, alleging that Sunday was a man-made Sabbath. He preached the non-immortality of the soul and that man when dead continues dead till God at the Resurrection calls him from the grave. He placed special emphasis on the fact that we are temples of God and our bodies physically, mentally, and morally in the best possible condition—clean, wholesome and pure for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Every recent and extraordinary event in nature and history was brought forward to show that earth's final day was near at hand. Scriptural quotations were used to show that calamities and unusual events foreshadowed the coming of Christ. Services were held in school houses when permitted, but more frequently in private dwellings. Many came to hear him, at first from curiosity and later from conviction that he was right. Several became members of his sect, among them my parents. After preaching for several weeks in Big Slough, he began work in Plum Creek, where at one time he had a considerable following.

Among those who still adhere to his teachings are my mother, Mrs. Oliver Hegg, and my father-in-law, Bendik Fristad.

I naturally followed my mother's lead and for two or three years considered that in a religious way I had found the truth. I was at this time in my 17th year and as I had worked on the Green Bay railroad east of Merrillan until Christmas time during the fall of 1872 beyond my strength, suffered from cold and over-eating, my health was poor. This fact in connection with the dark pictures of human wickedness and prospective destruction of all earthly things naturally inclined me to go into the ministry in order to help save as many from the wrath to come as possible.

It was during this winter that I first became acquainted with Miss Oline Fristad, who afterwards became my wife. In the spring of

1873 she hired out to work for a Mr. Schaefer, then living on the Ingalls farm in the town of Lincoln. Mrs. Schaefer was an enthusiastic follower of the "Truth" as preached by Olson and though her husband did not agree with her in this, he permitted her full freedom in the exercise of her belief.

My health at the time not permitting me to work, I spent a number of days in the Schaefer household, where I was very kindly treated, and it was while staying there that I became engaged to Miss Fristad. It was while there that one bright day in early summer my wife-to-be and I followed Mr. Olson down to the Trempealea river and were baptized.

Hopes and Disappointments

January 10, 1876, I left Wisconsin to begin my school work, but when I reached Battle Creek, Mich., I was so poorly that I stopped off there and went to what was then known as the "Health Institute" for treatment. March 23rd I left the Institute and went to Monroe, Wis., having partly recovered. This Health Institute was then managed largely by the S. D. A. Church and was built to carry out the ideas of this sect in regard to treatment of the body in sickness. Very little medicine was used. Bathing and fomentations were largely employed and great attention given to exercise and diet. These people also employed prayer and the laying on of hands in case of extreme sickness.

Dr. Kellogg, then a young man, was one of the physicians, and Dr. Russel another.

While at the Institute I met some very estimable people. The most notable person with whom I became acquainted was Francesco Urgos, once a member of a noble family in Italy. He had joined with Garibaldi in a revolution and with him was banished from Italy. They came to United States together.

After some sad experiences Urgos became a convert to the doctrines taught by the S. D. A. and at the time I was at Battle Creek he was there for the purpose of having his biography printed, a copy of which is in my library. He needed a constant attendant, having been totally blinded through the machinations of his Jesuit enemies. I became his attendant and as he planned to go through the states on a lecturing tour as soon as his biography was printed, he engaged me to go with him. This was very agreeable to me, but unfortunately his health failed and he never recovered sufficiently to make the tour planned.

Later on in the winter I engaged to go to Texas to canvass for a Bible House under the management of a bright and cultured man who was a general agent of this book concern. The arrangement was that this young man was to go on ahead and look over the field and if promising, he was to send for me. He was to write me at my home in Jackson county, Wis., where my folks lived, for I intended to go there in the spring. But I changed my mind and went to Monroe, Wis., and wrote my folks to forward any letters that might come in my name. No letter came from my friend in Texas, so I took up canvassing in the southern part of the state for a paper issued especially in the interest of the World's Fair at Philadelphia. This venture proved unsuccessful, and in September, 1876, I bought a horse and light wagon and started for home.

This was the year of the great spring flood when so many mills and bridges went out, and on my way home I found many signs of the ravages of the flood. The autumn proved very rainy and much grain was spoiled in the fields and in stacks. My trip homeward was not very eventful. Generally I camped out nights, but at Richland Center I found myself compelled to stay at a hotel two days on account of the rain.

The night before I reached Richland Center I camped a mile or two below the town. Soon after I had unhitched it began to rain. The only thing of value I had was a trunk full of books. The trunk was a cheap, worn affair, and being afraid my books would get wet I lay down on top of the trunk. The rain came faster and faster. I took the trunk and put it under the wagon and tried to sleep on it, but this was worse for the wagon box gathered the water and it poured through the wagon in steady streams. After midnight I got up and paced back and forth and sometimes stood for many minutes in the open almost laughing over my plight. Toward morning I hitched up and drove into town and after much pounding on the door of a hotel was admitted and stayed until the rain was over.

About five miles north of Sparta in thick timber I drove out of the highway on a road evidently used in winter for getting wood, and unhitched to camp for the night. I had unhitched, tethered my horse and was eating my lunch when I heard a wagon coming toward me along the winter road. The wagon stopped and I heard a man talking to his horses and to his dog. They were not in sight and it was growing dark, so I concluded to make my presence known. The man was unhitching and getting ready to camp. It soon began to rain. The man, after telling me that he had been north to look at lands and was returning to his home farther south, invited me to sleep with him in his wagon for he had an umbrella which would at least keep our heads dry. I accepted his invitation and we lay down side by side and slept through the drizzling rain which fell all night.

And this brings to mind many times when I have slept side by side with strangers indoors and outdoors, whom I met in the evening and parted with in the morning never to see again. I never was superstitious and as for suspecting harm or wrong from strangers, that has never bothered me to any appreciable extent. As the years have added to my experiences I have come more and more to the conclusion that it is better to be beaten and disappointed now and then than to nurture a suspicious nature. The day after sleeping with the stranger there in the woods, I drove through Cataract.

This place brought vivid memories, for I had stayed at a German hotel there many nights in the summer of 1868, when I worked for Ambrose Wilson. But how different the hotel looked! Everything was out of repair. No teams, no jolly men, no traffic on the sandy

road that had killed so many horses before the railroad came north through the state. From Cataract to Davis' Ferry I don't remember of meeting a team. Except for birds gathering for their journey southward, there was a pathetic silence that almost saddened me for every mile had memories of the day when scores of teams passed and repassed every day hauling goods from Sparta to many northern towns and cross-roads.

Established Library at Pigeon Falls

My first real effort in trying to establish a library at Pigeon Falls was in the fall or winter of 1876 and 1877.

One night I went to J. D. Olds' house and for a couple of hours watched at a dance. Then I asked for permission to address the crowd, which was very readily granted. I mounted a chair in the center of the hot, steaming room and for half an hour or more I spoke from the spirit of Solomon's proverb, "Rejoice O young man in the days of thy youth but remember for all this thy God shall bring thee to judgment."

I did not censure nor condemn, but tried to emphasize the fact that man is a dual being of mind and matter and to feed only a part of our nature leads to a failure of God's object in the creation of man. I then called attention to the vast treasury of knowledge in books and before I left the house, I had in cash and subscriptions for a public library approximately seventy dollars, and nearly every dollar subscribed was eventually paid. This was soon doubled in amount, and for many years Pigeon Falls had a fair sized public library, a portion of the books being for a time left with Nels Mikkelsen in Schimnerhorn for distribution.

After watching the result of these various efforts for more than thirty-five years I have been amply compensated for my part in this social work.

With extremely few exceptions the people touched by my sometimes overzealous efforts for social betterment in this community for miles around have been loyal and constant friends, and whatever they could do for my advancement they have often at sacrifice to themselves been willing to do. No man has ever received so many and severe castigations from my tongue as Mr. J. D. Olds, and yet through it all he has never let an opportunity go by unimproved when he could help me. His life is full of inconsistencies, but I have found much gold among the dross. If time permits I shall leave a more extended sketch of his career since I have known him. Peder Ekern, by far the most intellectual man among the pioneers in Pigeon, was also always a consistent friend and had a great formative influence over my life in its more plastic state. To him I owe a more extended mention also, if my life is spared for awhile.

Beginning School Work

Much in our lives seems accidental. Perhaps we help produce the accident or else are in a measure ready for it. Since childhood I had always been fond of books and study. I learned everything, except mathematics, with little effort. Reading a hymn or chapter in the Bible or a poem two or three times was sufficient to commit what I read to memory if the selection covered only a page or two. In Norway I attended, as before stated, school not to exceed twenty-four weeks. In this country I

attended common district school about ten months scattered over several years. When about sixteen years old I attended school at Sechlerville, Jackson county, and the same winter prepared myself as candidate for confirmation. Hauge's Synod church being the most convenient, my parents decided that I should be confirmed by that branch of the Lutheran church. In Norway I had learned by heart Bishop Wexel's Catechism. Hauge's people found some heresies in this so discarded it. Thus I was compelled to learn another catechism much larger than Wexel's. However, I managed very well and when confirmed was given second honors. I was confirmed by Peter Solberg, the father-in-law of our well known citizen, Andrew Lewis Laug.

In my school work in this country I studied as far as fractions in Ray's arithmetic, got through the third reader, National Series, and primary geography. I never studied grammar nor writing as a science. Orthography and orthoepy as such were Greek to me. In spelling I was fair.

Such were my educational assets when in the fall of 1876, Sunday, October 29th, Gilbert F. Steig and Olaus Goplin, two of the school board of district No. —, town of Hale, came to me while I was grubbing on my step-father's place on Big Slough, and told me their school was to open in a day or two and the teacher they had hired had been taken sick. I told them I had never thought of teaching and was not prepared for that kind of work. They poohed the idea that I lacked the qualifications and insisted that I take their school. They gave me a week to get the required certificate.

The next day I went to H. P. Smith, our district clerk, to find out what branches were required for a third grade certificate. I learned that I had to be examined in thirteen different branches. I got as many text books as I could find but after a few hours' reflection, came to the conclusion that there was little use in trying to prepare in so short a time. So I wrote to the county superintendent, Amos Whitney, who lived not far from Marshland, that on a certain day, I think a Friday, I would come to his place for a private examination. In a day or so he replied that he would hold a special examination at Whitehall the week following, but as I was to begin my work on the next Monday this did not meet my case. On the day stated in my letter to Whitney I took the train at Whitehall and went to Marshland.

It was one of those beautiful, hazy autumn days that so often come to us who live in Wisconsin, that I walked out from the station to Mr. Whitney's home. I was in good spirits for the charm of Nature in autumnal glory was upon

me. I found Mr. Whitney a very pleasant and courteous man. His reception put me at ease at once and he immediately began a general conversation in which I very freely took part. Lacking text book knowledge I was not wanting in general information, for my association with men and women of culture and refinement during the few years I had been away from home had left impression on my speech and manners which gave a stranger the idea that I had really some education. After a short time I reminded Mr. Whitney of my purpose in coming. He again called my attention to the fact that because there were a number of prospective teachers who had not attended the regular examinations, he intended to hold a special examination the following week. I explained that I was expected to begin my work the next Monday following and begged for immediate examination.

Pleasantly he replied that it was nearly supper time and we would have that first. Supper time among Americans in those days came at five p. m. So we continued to converse until supper was ready. He introduced me to his wife, whom I found as agreeable as the husband, and my faculties cleared more and more as the meal and conversation progressed. After supper I went back with Mr. Whitney to the sitting room. Here Mr. Whitney continued for an hour or more conversing on general topics. I responded as freely as if I had known him for many days. But the sun was getting near the horizon and I was anxious to have my examination and return to Arcadia that evening, so I called attention to the question of examination again. Whitney's reply was a great surprise. In substance he said: "I have now talked with you for several hours and feel well satisfied that you are amply qualified to teach. I will give you a six-months permit for that is all I can grant to any one upon a private examination."

I thanked him and departed, knowing full well that I had in a manner covered my deficiencies by engaging with him in conversation on general subjects. I don't know how happy I was for I realized to some extent how much I lacked to fill the position which awaited me. But I relied on my capacity for learning quickly anything that was inside of books. The next Monday morning I was in the little white painted Huskelhus school house ready for the work.

All the little ones who came to that first school of mine were strangers to me but in a very short time we were earnest pupils working hard to acquire knowledge. Before Christmas the school room was packed. Many came who were older than I to learn English, because I was a Norwegian and it was naturally inferred that I could teach new-comers better than one who could not speak Norwegian. Among others was my friend Iver Elmon, my senior by a year. He was always in a class by himself. He had had some schooling and was quite as proficient in English as I was except in pronunciation. He was one of the most rapid learners I have met, I did not assign him any particular lessons but heard him recite as long as I had time. I don't know what his limit for memorizing was. All through the thirty-eight years that have passed since that winter when I first met him I have never been able to measure his memory. And the friendship there begun between us has not lessened through the years.

Through the winter the school was one of the most successful I ever taught. We were a group of enthusiasts working like partners for a common purpose. Some time during the latter part of winter came Supt. Whitney. He remained half a day, and when ready to go he asked me to step outside. When the door had been closed behind us he took me by the hand and complimented me on my work and said, "If you teach this school during the spring term you need not go to the trouble of attending the spring examination. Just drop me a line if you intend to remain here and I will send you another permit." I was thoroughly aware of my limitations as a scholar and very glad to accept his kind offer. My wages were \$25 for a month, but I found myself very thankful when the board offered me the spring term.

During the winter I boarded with Olaus Goplin, who was then a bachelor. His father and mother stayed with him and two of his brothers. During this winter we had very little snow, and they did plowing on January 1, 1877. When I went back to teach the next term I engaged board with the Elmons, for a warm friendship had grown up between Iver and myself. Never shall I forget those wonderful three months of that term. The Elmon house was very small but Iver and I had all outdoors for our long walks and intimate conversations and dreams. Little learning we had, but such large appetites for information and such exquisite zest in discovering the opening fields in which knowledge could be found. During spring Iver had to work and also his sister, who was only a little younger than I, and who

After the close of my school I worked much of the summer for Elmon. In the fall of 1877 I bought my step-father's place. My capital amounted to one old horse, a "democrat" wagon, and some books. December 11, 1877, I married Miss Oline Fristad, to whom I had been engaged nearly five years. I was twenty-two and she twenty-three. Working for wages of from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per week, she had saved up about one hundred dollars.

We were married by H. P. Smith, justice of the peace, and, except the justice and his wife, we had no guests except our respective parents. We were married in our own home—log cabin 13x13, 6 feet from floor to ceiling, with a low attic, where the roof came down to the ceiling on the sides. A small lean-to big enough for a bed was added to the east side of the cabin. Here we spent our honeymoon. I soon awoke to the fact that in buying the farm I had undertaken more than I could carry out. So the following summer I sold at a heavy loss to Jens Berge.

The winter of 1877-1878 I did not teach. In 1878-1879 I taught in Big Slough, and in the fall of 1879 I hired out to teach the school at Pigeon Falls known at that time as the Olds District.

I began the school November 10th in the old school house built in 1866 on the NE-NE, 2-22-7. The house had homemade desks and seats and was so crowded that two of the pupils occupied the teacher's seat. I well remember that Even Erickson, then a newcomer, 28 years old, used to sit on my seat facing the school. During my work as a teacher, I seldom sat down except for roll call. Later in the fall, Dec. 9, 1879, the new school house at Pigeon Falls was completed and on the day for moving into the new building we all met at the old school house and arranged ourselves in marching order by two's. Some carried colored handkerchiefs and neck-scarfs fastened on sticks for banners. All were happy over the change. As I write, the "Register" used by me during that winter lies before me. It shows that enrollment reached 88. Teaching in all the grades such a large number meant but little "teaching." But there was inspiration, the creation of an impulse to find out things, which, perhaps, in the ultimate analysis is the highest attainment in school work; for every step advanced, for every luminous height reached under an inward impulse excites the curiosity while it feeds the desire and progress is assured.

While teaching this term one incident occurred worthy of note. After dismissing school one evening as I was about to go home, I heard a great noise in the brush—there was brush all around the school house. I ran to the place where the noise came from and found a dozen or more boys engaged in a lively fight. I brought the boys all back to the school house and held an investigation. On some subsequent day I took the matter up with the boys and gave them the choice of three different punishments.

1. Take a whipping.
2. Wear a fool's cap and remain in during several recesses.
3. Report the matter to their respective parents and take such punishment as they desired to give them. Nearly all the boys volunteered to take a whipping at my hands.

I think it was several days before I administered the whipping. The boys all took it bravely, but when I got through there was scarcely a dry eye in the house. Many of the girls and boys sobbed audibly and I had great difficulty in holding back my own tears and emotion. This was the last and only time I administered corporal punishment while teaching. Although my punishment this time engendered no ill will towards me on the part of those punished, I abhorred the necessity and soon learned there were better ways of governing reasoning beings than subjugating them by such brutal methods.

In the winter of 1880 and 1881 I taught in Curran valley, Jackson county, a fine registration but a miserable low log building. The stove was in the middle of the room with a row of seats on each side. The stove pipe was extended back over my desk, which was in the back part of the room, and when I stood behind my desk my head almost touched the pipe. The heat for my head was at times almost intolerable. Every available space was filled with pupils, but we had a splendid school nevertheless.

During the winter of 1881 and 1882 I taught again in Pigeon Falls. In point of numbers, my school was a record breaker. My enrollment was 96—average daily attendance 66. A few weeks before the school closed I was completely worn out. I weighed but 138 pounds and was scarcely able to either sleep or eat. I told the board to find another teacher and let me quit. They insisted that I should take a week or two vacation and then return and finish up, but I knew that would be but little help as I would worry during the vacation so I quit absolutely and went on a visit to my folks, who then lived in Beaver Creek. In a week's time of out-door life and jolly company, I was a new man again.

A Trip to the Dakotas

The West still called me, and on May 23, 1882, in company with my friend, Iver Elmon, I left home for North Dakota. Our destination was Turtle Mountains. Elmon had two yoke of steers only half broke. The first day we made only a few miles, stopping over night with Hans Olson Norsveen on Elk Creek. The next night we camped about three miles east of Arcadia. When we woke on the morning of the 25th, we found a heavy frost. Even water in pools had a thin coating of ice. The next evening quite late we reached Winona. Going down one of the long steep Mississippi bluffs I seriously feared trouble with out fractious steers.

yoke of steers were hitched to one wagon. Iver lead the first oxen, I lead the others. The road was so situated that in order to be on the right side of the oxen we had to walk on the lower ground of the sloping hillside. I had no liking for the risk involved, and suggested that we tie our ropes on the off ox, but Eimon thought it would be best to keep on the side we were. I told Eimon as he was unmarried he had a right to take all the chances he wished, but I had a family and would prefer a safer position. I changed the rope on my oxen and walked on the upper side of the road. Nothing happened and we got down in fine shape. At Winona we took a car for Ordway, S. D. Sunday morning, May 29th, we laid over at Huron, S. D., where we let our oxen out for a rest and water. I was much amused in watching another immigrant car which stopped over. After all the cattle had been let out, out came an old man who looked as if he had lain under a straw stack all summer. He was about as dirty and mused up as he could be. He, like many others in those days, had hid in the car so as to get passage free. The car came from Ohio and had been on the road four or five days. Come to think of it there was an extra man or boy in our company who didn't have any ticket. It was a cheap way of traveling but mighty uncomfortable, for an inspector was likely to drop in any minute when least expected.

Reaching Ordway we unloaded—this was the end of R. R. then—and prepared to get ready for our journey to the land of promise—mountains veiled with purple hues.

At Ordway, or soon after, Even Gullord, one of his sons and Hans Solsrud joined us and although they had horses, we traveled together until the end of our journey. I shall ever be grateful for the privilege of learning to know Even Gullord. He was already an old man. He had gone through with the very front of pioneers, for I believe it is of record that he was the first Norwegian settler on Coon Prairie, Vernon county. He had come in an early day to Jackson county and for many years was in the lumber business, and at one time had considerable property, but when I met him on the Dakota prairies he had very little left. But without uttering a word of complaint or sigh over the past, he was helpful and cheerful as a hopeful boy. He shamed me who was still in the glums and often pessimistic over the future. His ready kindness won me completely and the memory of him is like the memory of a sunshiny, bracing morning.

Our journey day by day was naturally monotonous for from Ordway to Jamestown we saw rarely a house of any sort. Eimon had two good milch cows so we had plenty of milk and, of course lived like Arab chiefs. Water was sometimes scarce. We found that washing dishes dry dirt was a most superior, to water. I've taught us that. We naturally traveled slowly—fifteen to eighteen miles a day. It was June, the month of flowers. The prairies

emerald. The preceding fall fires had apparently swept away all the tall grasses. Every few rods we crossed Buffalo trails leading in all directions. The trails had, evidently, been used for years for all were deep in the soil. Frequently we found Buffalo "Wallows" that looked like fatty-wings and at no time were we where we could not see dozens of buffalo skulls and sometimes hundreds. The other bones of the animals had been consumed by fires.

Near Jamestown in a hollow where there was a spring lay the skull and bones also of hundreds of buffalo, just killed for fun by sports and soldiers. On June 5th we reached Jamestown. Here Iver changed his mind about going to Turtle Mountains. I felt some disappointment and as I had neither money nor property invested in the trip, I had nothing to say. I remained behind and Iver and our other companions started for Griggs County, N. D.

On June 8th, I hired to work on a R. R. building from Jamestown north. I began by driving mules. On June 7th before going to work, I went to a theatre for the first time in my life. It was vaudeville of a low order, but mighty lively.

On July 5th, about 12 miles north of Jamestown, I was awakened early in the morning by a cry of "Buffalo." Seventy-five men were out of their tents in a minute and we all started for the highest rise of ground where we could see for miles. We had several cowboys in camp, two of whom jumped on to some ponies with Winchester in their hands and off they went. The buffalo was a big bull running eastward toward James River and as we first sighted him only about one-half mile distant, our cowboys soon came up within shooting distance, but all their shots apparently went wild. We watched the race until they disappeared near the river where the buffalo plunged into the brush and low ground and was saved. He made better speed than I had imagined so heavy an animal could make. From appearance, I judged he weighed from 12 to 18 hundred pounds. He was probably one of the last of his race east of the Missouri.

Our head "boss" was in Irishman. As fine a specimen, physically, of that race which has so many fine men, as I ever saw, but he was heartless and cruel. It was the policy of the contractors, who were eastern men, to always move camps on Sunday, at which all the men were expected to help, but no pay was allowed. On the 7th of July, Sunday, we were to move several miles farther on. Most of us had already moved once on Sunday without kicking. This time, early in the morning, the boys gathered and elected me for spokesman to present our grievances to the boss. As soon as I had started our case, the boss called us into his office and told us practically to go to hell. We insisted on our time. To this demand he yielded and, placing a six-shooter on the table while one of the sub-bosses sat by him

with a Winchester, he made out our time. Nearly all the men quit and in a body we went to Jamestown. Many were sick from the alkali water. I was not affected, perhaps because I seldom drank, even in hot weather, and when I did, I always drank water mixed with oatmeal.

On Monday we all went to the head office of the contractors and I presented our case again and told the agent we would all go back to work if he would appoint as boss a certain Swede (Erick Nelson) who was an expert R. R. man, but at the present down and out. But the agent refused our request and gave us our checks. I had only a dollar or so, and as our checks were not payable for some time, I left for Griggs county, where Eimon and my friends had located. Before I left, Erick Nelson tucked a "5" in my pocket and remarked, "Pay whenever you can." I walked by government marks recently set, through sloughs, shallow lakes and tall grasses and weeds. On my way I stayed over night with Dazey, a New York man, author of a play called the "Western King."

I had been reading about it before I left home in the New York Critic for which, at that time, I was a subscriber. When I learned his name, I asked him if he was related to the author of that play which had recently had a very successful run in Chicago. This pleased him so much that we became chummy in a very short time. Although afterward a scholar and man of ability, he was decidedly "green" so far as western life was concerned. His father, a wealthy man, had a large ranch and the young man was there for a vacation. I believe there is a little town now where the ranch was, called Dazey. He offered me a job on his ranch, but I longed for the Wisconsin hills and woods and still more for my loved ones in their little cabin on Big Slough, so I refused his offer and the next morning started for Griggs county. The weather was warm, and to make the way as short as possible, I continued to follow government lines notwithstanding I sometimes had to wade through sloughs and lakelets. On July 12th, I came to Eimon's claim. He was camping under a wagon cover fastened to the ground, which we entered on all fours. On the 13th, I went with Iver about a mile to where he had a sod hut in process of construction and while there, I was taken sick. Until noon I lay on the prairie shading my face with my hat. Then I staggered back to camp with Iver, unable to eat, and crawled under the wagon cover. Then came three days and nights of the keenest suffering I ever experienced.

The mosquitoes attacked me until I was nearly insane, and if we dropped the canvas at the ends of the cover I suffocated.

For Home Again

One night I must have been delirious, for I thought thousands of little devils were torturing me. On the 16th of July Iver had to go to Duel County to save a claim he had there and his brother, Christian, was left to attend me. From Griggs to Duel County Iver walked all the way day and night. Splendid health and endurance has been Iver's position through life. On July 24th I left the camp, still weak but improving. I reached

Sanborn in the evening, paid 50 cents for a poor supper and then crawled into a barn for rest. Mosquitoes fed on me all night. I arose with the dawn and waked 12 miles to Valley City before breakfast, where I found a registered letter awaiting me with my money from the R. R. contractor. The postmaster, a Norwegian, looked me over and refused me the letter. I showed the letter I had from George Hale, hotelkeeper at Jamestown, who had collected the money for me, but without results. I had several other letters and papers to identify me, but he refused. I was in a dilemma. The next day I made another attempt and while the post office was full of people, he fairly screamed at me his refusal. This nettled me and I turned loose on him some of the flow of my native language and told him if I had come to him in fine clothes with a silk hat and a well fed appearance with the mark of indentification I had already shown him, he would have turned the letter over to me if I had been one of the worst sharpers in America. That the little moment of position and authority which he had been favored with, had swelled him so that he couldn't see the rights of the poor. I frankly confess I abused him. Perhaps he didn't deserve all I said, but I had taken his measure quite accurately and without a word in reply he asked me to sign the receipt and handed me the letter.

Before leaving Valley City I visited a round hill east of the town which rises from the prairie 100 feet like a perfect quadrangle with a flat top of several rods in diameter. I climbed this hill and had a day dream. I wanted to build an Academy here from which the light of knowledge should travel far. In those days education seemed to me to be the panacea for nearly all the ills of man. I was going to get learning enough, somehow, so that I could teach the sacred classics and thus do my share toward the enlightenment of the world.

I even went and looked up the

owner of the hill whom I found to be a German or Hollander. He couldn't talk English very well, and wouldn't name any price for the hill, but became very curious as to my purpose in wanting it. Finally he asked me if I was going to build a windmill on it. This stirred the latent humor in my nature and I came away with my "Dream Academy" shattered, but considerably refreshed.

On July 27, I was on the N. P. train bound for home, on the 29th of July, back in the home harbor. On the 12th of August I went to Black River Falls to attend teacher's examination for I had been hired to teach the Curran Valley school during the coming year.

August 23rd, I dug a grave for one of Halvor Monson's children, who died from diphtheria, and the following day gave a short funeral address. A week later I was called on by the same parents to give another funeral address as the same disease had called another of their children—a lad about 15 years old.

About Nov. 6th, I began a five-months school in Curran Valley—still in the same old log hut. By this time I had become very fond of skiing and largely through my influence many of the boys, several of whom were young men, got skis and we had very good times all winter in this sport. Curran Valley was always a staid and prosperous community and boys and girls came to school to learn.

I taught again in the same district in the winter of 1883 and 1884. We found a new building, and I enjoyed my work better than ever. We still kept up our ski exercises and I spent many hours with my scholars as a comrade—almost a chum and many ties of friendship then made still hold as firmly as ever. The next spring, after my school closed in Curran Valley, I taught a few weeks in Big Slough. I was now competent to teach the best district schools anywhere, but lacked technical knowledge for higher work and had neither time nor money to take up higher studies. Anything but mathematics I could easily have mastered, but I had little taste for figures. I also realized that my family was rapidly growing and teaching district schools at \$25 to \$40 per month would never build up much for the future. In this state of mind, I had a talk with P. Ekern one day and he advised me to go into some law office and prepare myself for the profession of law. This thought had never entered my mind, in fact, from the general reputation current among the farmers of the rascality, etc., of lawyers, I had little taste of the work. My hope and aim for some years had been to become a missionary and I am not very sure but what I was right. But as my eyes opened to the vast field of dogmas and rituals and the small amount of practical religion, I became discouraged. I then turned more and more to the law of nature, the education and environments of our fellows as the impelling causes of our actions and habits of life. I wanted to know all that was possible. To be a perpetual learner and ever-growing teacher became my ambition, and to this day no calling so appeals to me. No one can teach the pure little children continually and live in the bondage of vice or gross habits without being punished by his own conscience. The teacher must at least try to live up to a standard which every day he is setting up for his pupils.

I Move to Whitehall and Begin the Study of Law

But even the strongest must yield to the inexorable demand for food and shelter, and I was not of the strong; had I been, I should today be a Professor instead of a Judge.

I, therefore, took my friend's advice and in the summer of 1884, moved to Whitehall, where at once I entered the office of O. J. Allen, the first lawyer in the northern and eastern part of Trempealeau county.

From my old friend, George Olds, I bought a small house and lot for \$275.00, on which I paid down \$25.00.

Mr. Allen, a poor lawyer at best, and very ignorant on general subjects, was no help to me, both because he had very little knowledge of law and because he was at the time in failing health. He had a lot of claim against poor people and dead-beats and he gave these to me for collection on a commission basis. I got unpleasant, but perhaps profitable experience out of this work but very little money. By fall Allen had to leave his office and my work with him was over. During the following winter I clerked for D. L. Camp, who ran a general store. Camp's business was small and he was one of the bluest men in the village. He was a wit and humorist, but as a business man never succeeded. My salary was small and in order to add to my income, I had a few American evenings to whom I taught Norwegian, following the Meister Shaft system. Among them were T. H. Earl and Dr. Fred Lester. They were great story-tellers and the result was more stories were exchanged than knowledge of the Norwegian language.

Sometime after my coming to Whitehall, a farmers' institute was held at the court house. Through the influence of Earl and John O. Melby, I was placed on the program for an address or paper. I prepared a paper with the title, "What Will the Smart American Boy Do?" This gave me a much wider standing among all classes and like Byron, I awoke one morning and found myself famous, among my friends, at least. The following spring at the town caucus—for the village was still unincorporated—Earl, John O. Melby and A. W. Anderson got together and determined to put me in, if possible, as town clerk. I was nominated and elected. This was a great help, though the office on ly paid about \$75.00 a year. Ed Elstad also helped me by appointing me as janitor for the court house whenever we had circuit court. I also did the janitor work for the Methodist and Baptist churches and school house. In spare time, I sawed wood and in the summer went haying and harvesting and worked on the high ways through the good offices of my friend and neighbor, Ole Knudson.

The following winter I had class of new-comers and some other whom I taught. Two or three

Go to Law School

In the fall of 1887, I started for Madison. The morning when the school was about to open I walked up to the Capitol where, at that time, the law students met for their lectures, and on the steps I met an Irishman who had graduated the year before. We got into a conversation for the hour was early and I told him my situation. Little money, wife and five children, health delicate, etc. He says, "You get the librarianship and that will save you \$75." "But," I replied, "How am I to get that without a soul to recommend me? I am a perfect stranger here." "You go right over to the dean (Sloan), he is a pretty good reader of men, and tell your story straight and ask him and you can't tell what will happen." I did so at once, and told him my story. He listened patiently, and finally remarked: "This position is usually given to one of the seniors and there are several applications in, but we will see what can be done." I went back to the Capitol and attended my first lecture on law. A few days after when Mr. Sloan had finished his lecture, he beckoned me and said: "We have decided to let you take charge of the library." This gave me more courage and the use of books, which was quite an item.

The regular course was two years, but I realized it would be too great a risk for me to spend this length of time in school and the money necessary for my expenses and support of family, so after some thought over the matter I concluded to attend lectures given to Juniors and Seniors and try for the examinations for both years in one. I have worked hard so often in my life that it is difficult to select any particular time and say that I worked hardest. I worked up to the limit and when May and June came, I had nearly reached the limit of physical endurance. I slept poorly, and often at dawn I arose and walked out of the city to compose my nerves.

This winter was one of the coldest in the history of the state. The house where my family lived was very poorly built. Water froze almost solid between the stove and wall. January 21, 6 a. m., was probably the coldest day recorded in Wisconsin, and at that very hour another member was added to my family in the form of a girl whose name is an echo of that never-to-be-forgotten morning.

My wife and I had agreed to give all our girls plant and flower names, so we called this child of the frost, Arctic Olive. I was in Madison in terrible suspense for several days waiting for news of this expected event. The baby came on Saturday and in those days there was no phone from Whitehall to Madison, and neither I nor my wife had accustomed ourselves to make any cost where we could save by waiting, so I got no news until Monday. I find in my daily journal kept at the time that the village thermometer on Saturday morning, January 21, 1888, registered 62½ below zero. L. H. Whitney, who then lived at Coral City, had a spirit thermometer which he assured me he had found fairly accurate for many years, told me it registered 56.

Later in the season we had heavy snows and then a rain came, then cold, which froze the snow almost solid. I have heard men say they could skate on the snow right over the fences almost anywhere. On the 24th, I got a letter from home again written by my wife. This was concrete evidence of her well-being and cheered me greatly.

On March 17, I took a run home to see my family and on April 4, left home for Madison. There were about two feet of snow on the ground when I left. After my return, one examination followed another in quick succession. In June, I got my diploma and very shortly afterward I commenced practicing what little I had learned. John De Bow, living near Blair, helped me greatly by beginning petty cases which I defended. I think I won in every case.

I used to go to Blair, try a lawsuit and almost invariably walked home in the evening. At this time the Prohibition party had some influence in our state politics and in principle, I was a Prohibitionist and the result was that when the county convention was held by the Prohibitionists, I was nominated for District Attorney. Of course, I had no chance of winning as a candidate on that ticket. E. Q. Nye, who was then the district attorney, was re-nominated by the Republicans. The Democratic party was, at that time, sadly in the minority in Trempealeau county.

But Steve Richmond, who for years was the leading spirit in the Democratic party, held Nye worse than any man on the face of the earth. He was willing to forego the pleasure of nominating a true-blue Democrat for district attorney to defeat Nye and with Mike Warner, had sufficient influence to nominate me at the Democratic convention.

I was called on to make some remarks by way of endorsing the Democratic principles. I responded by telling the boys that I would not stultify myself for any prospect that their nomination would afford me, but admitted that I had little faith in protective duties, but as for the temperance issue, I was a prohib. This little talk almost upset the calculations of my friendly Democrats, but "Death to Nye" was Richmond's slogan and I was nominated. But with these two nominations I was still very far from overcoming the Republican majority. But right here comes another factor which contributed to my success.

During the summer of 1888, Chas. Bowman, who was then a resident of Whitehall, was doing a good deal of driving through the country and like a good many others, he often came to cross-roads and forking highways and found himself at a loss which road to take in order to reach a given point.

His conclusion was a natural one that there ought to be guide boards at such places, and perhaps he had heard there was a statute to the effect that it was the duty of

town boards to erect guide boards at such places. At any rate, he went to E. Q. Nye and got counsel, and the result was that he should act as complainant against the various town boards, and Nye would prosecute under the statute which provided that a substantial forfeiture should be paid by the parties whose duty it was to put up guide boards, a share of this forfeiture to be paid to the complainant. This money Bowman agreed to divide with Nye. But as the summer drew on toward convention time, Nye thought differently of the matter and in a manner threw Bowman down. This angered Bowman and as he chanced to have the complaint drawn by Nye in his possession, he caused it to be published in The Whitehall Times. This created considerable feeling against Nye and gave color to the story told by Bowman of the existing agreement between him and Nye.

Another factor in the game of politics was the merit Nye had incurred from D. L. Holcomb and R. L. Dickens of Arcadia, both leading men in the community and influential Republicans. They did all they could to defeat Nye also.

On election day, after I had voted, I took the train to Blair to see what was doing. Walking up the street I found a cluster of men listening to Henry Thorsgaard, who was electioneering against me very heartily, but on seeing me the crowd broke and as I went on up the street, most of the men followed.

When I reached A. B. Peterson's corner on Main and Broadway, I came onto a much larger crowd listening to a speech by J. L. DeBow, who loved me about as much as Richmond loved Nye. DeBow did not see me for some time, so I had a chance to get the drift of his argument, which was in substance to the effect that I had been writing to the Democratic State Central Committee to send Democratic speakers into Trempealeau county. "This," he commented, "showed what kind of Prohib I was and what kind of a man I was." This statement shocked me, for there was just enough truth behind it to give calor to his argument.

But it was a lie in the way it was used and I promptly stepped to the front to deny the statement. DeBow was standing in a stairway several steps up as he harangued the crowd and when I got to the foot of the stairway I pointed my finger at him and in a voice not quite steady, but of good volume, I said: "John DeBow, you are a liar from the ground up." His reply was, "E. Q. Nye is no liar." I answered, "If he says what you have said, he is a liar from the ground up."

John then retorted, "Well, John C. Gaveney is not a liar." My answer was the same with increasing emphasis on the word liar.

This little tilt with DeBow was the last piece of luck that helped me win in the election that day, for my majority was only about 75 votes, if I remember correctly.

(To be continued)

Part XVII

A Dangerous Prominence

My sudden elevation from a general chore-boy to one of the most important positions in the county gave me a dangerous prominence, dangerous to myself as well as the public. As I look back now from an advance distance of 26 years, I see more clearly the absurd depths that my sudden elevation created around me. My position was changed, but all ignorance, lack of experience and limitations followed me.

The two years following were years of arduous work. I had no less than six cases of murder and manslaughter to investigate and prosecute.

Naturally my private business also received a strong impulse forward. Then came the "Original Package" decision which turned loose in every dry town so many unscrupulous whiskey vendors. This added much to my work for I never hesitated to prosecute that class of men when I could find evidence that warranted a hope for conviction. To recite the difficulties of my work as public prosecutor would be like writing a history of what is taking place daily around us. One or two instances may, however, be instructive as showing how different matters look to the casual and half-informed onlooker from the views presented to the person having the responsibilities of making his complaints good. I think it was during my second year as district attorney that a certain Norwegian named Bolstad drove into the village of Independence one day and after tying his oxen proceeded to get full. I was told that when under the influence of drink he was very noisy and vulgar in his talk. At any rate, there was a demand for his restraint from the public who saw and heard him. Tour Faulds was the village marshal and as soon as his attention was called to the matter, he went in search of Bolstad.

For a while he reasoned with him and tried to persuade him to go home, but like the average drunken man, he refused to take good advice. Faulds then got his oxen and sleighs and put Bolstad into the box on the sleighs and lead the oxen across the bridge and milldam.

After going some distance, Bolstad managed to crawl out of the box and stagger back to town. After disposing of the oxen, Faulds arrested Bolstad, but Bolstad refused to come. Faulds called an assistant and between the two, dragged Bolstad along for some distance. Faulds being a big, strong man finally concluded he could carry Bolstad more easily than drag him along. So he picked him up, but Bolstad kicked, pulled Faulds' hair and whiskers and finally fought himself free from one of the arms of Faulds and fell on his head on the frozen ground. Apparently, he was no worse off for this fall, but he was put into the lockup and left there until morning. The next day he was taken home and after a few days, died. Medical examination disclosed the fact that a ligament in the neck had burst or broken and that he died from hemorrhage.

After his death a demand for the arrest of Tour Faulds for murder was demanded. A coroner's inquest was had and very full testimony taken of every occurrence connected with his arrest and confinement. Leading men from the village of Independence like J. C. Taylor, Gaveney and Comstock, testified. N. D. Comstock took down the testimony. The jury exonerated Faulds entirely. I examined the evidence carefully and concluded it would be a crime to arrest Faulds, although he was a man for whom I had very little regard. The man dead was a farmer leaving a wife and 7 or 8 children and one of my countrymen.

Every present consideration except the justice of the matter, urged me to arrest the marshal and throw the blame for acquittal on the jury who might try him. My refusal to arrest him brought a lot of criticism and reproaches. The marshal had bought me. This was a common charge among the neighbors of the dead man. My countrymen having helped me to a high position, now I was too puffed up to help them when they needed help. This and much more of the same tenor was the stuff the public was fed for many months, perhaps years. Mrs. Bolstad came to me and pleaded for the arrest of Faulds. I told her there was nothing to prevent me from arresting him, but every consideration of right forbade it, besides the utter futility of the proceeding. I warned her against spending money on lawyers, and told her that the county would appoint an attorney in my place to prosecute if it was proper to prosecute. But she had several attorneys interested in the matter. Losey & Woodward of La Crosse examined the evidence and reported there was no cause for prosecution. H. C. Larson of Eau Claire was consulted and came to see me. I offered him even assistance for taking my place, but he did nothing. Governor Knudt Nelson of Minneapolis, an old friend of the family, was consulted. He reported the case to Governor Hoard who in turn called on me to explain the matter. After a detailed explanation, he complimented me on my stand. But still many thought I had been bought off.

My salary as district attorney was \$500 a year, with no allowances for travelling expenses or hotel bills except on state business

outside the county.

After paying expenses, very little of the salary remained. For this reason, when my term expired, I concluded to keep out of politics until I had acquired enough to support me without being dependent on official salaries. My private business increased rapidly and kept me reasonably busy.

In 1890, G. Y. Freeman of Galesville became district attorney and as he did not care to move away from home and sacrifice much of his private practice, he arranged with me to look after minor matters and occupy the office room of the district attorney. This saved me rent and fuel.

In January, 1893, P. C. Button was elected district attorney. He wanted the same arrangement that I had with Freeman, so I had free office room two more years. In 1894, Herman L. Ekern, now my son-in-law, graduated from the Wisconsin Law School and immediately after his graduation he entered into partnership with me. Ekern had for two years been a pupil of mine when I taught at Pigeon Falls, and his ability even then (he was only six years when he first came to school) was pronounced. In the fall of 1894, he was elected district attorney and served four years. Again I was saved a heavy item in expense. Ekern's coming into the firm was a great help for he had ambition and tireless energy with a remarkable keenness for system and details which I lacked. In a short time I realized greater freedom from slavish toil. My health, always capricious, often reached near the breaking point and even my enemies will accord my testimony to the effect that I worked as hard as it was possible for me to work. Usually I was the first and the last man in the court house. In those halcyon days, we officers always built our own fires and did our own cleaning in the offices. Usually I quit work at nine or ten o'clock in the evening, but while I was alone I put in many nights until the early morning hours. A country lawyer cannot specialize, hence every legal proposition from eaves-dropping to the most intricate problems of real estate law are liable to come up in his practice, and no man knows all the law, and as a rule, every new case involves a new question. With 48 states besides the federal government grinding out new laws and new decisions, the task of keeping up with the law is one which no mortal can accomplish.

And when it is understood that every move the lawyer makes, whether he drafts a common contract or pleading or gives advice, is liable to be challenged, we must realize he is constantly in the field of battle.

No profession can ever involve more strenuous labor or serve as a greater polisher of the mind. Religion, science, politics, sociology, human nature—~~as~~ brief every-kind of knowledge within the range of human reach must be his to the extent of that possessed by his possible competitor. Doctors, preachers, and other professional men may get on with last year's discoveries and opinions, but the lawyer must have yesterday's laws and decisions to fortify his position. His mistakes are advertised to the world by judgments of courts and the attorneys on the other side of the case with a promptitude often humiliating to the man who is not up with the rapidly marching ranks of his brethren in the profession.

We are near